

# Curriculum Vitae

## Short version

✉ nathanael.fijalkow@gmail.com • 🌐 <http://games-automata-play.com/>

### Personal

---

Born in 1987. Married, two children: Léa (2019) and Noé (2021).

### Research Positions and Education

---

#### Habilitation

*French degree allowing me to supervise PhD students*

**University of Bordeaux**

*11 Feb 2022*

#### Current

---

#### Junior Researcher

*Chargé de recherche*

**CNRS, LaBRI, Bordeaux**

*Since Jan 2018*

#### Visiting Professor

**University of Warsaw, Poland**

*Sept. 2022 – July 2023*

#### Past

---

#### Research Fellow

*Logical Foundations of Data Science*

**Alan Turing Institute of data science, London**

*Jan. 2017 – Aug. 2022*

#### Research Fellow

*Theoretical Foundations for Computer Systems*

**Simons Institute, University of Berkeley**

*Jan. 2021 – May. 2021*

#### Research Fellow

*Logical Structures in Computation*

**Simons Institute, University of Berkeley**

*Aug. 2016 – Dec. 2016*

#### Research Assistant

*Dynamical Systems*

**University of Oxford**

*Nov. 2015 – July 2016*

#### Education

---

#### PhD in Computer Science

*Counting and Randomising in Automata Theory*

Jointly supervised by Mikołaj Bojańczyk and Thomas Colcombet

**Paris 7 & Warsaw**

*Sept 2012 – Oct 2015*

### Five most important publications

---

In the publications below the interpretation on authors order depends on the venue: alphabetical for [4,5], and ordered by contributions for [2,3]. [1] is a special case. None include my PhD advisors.

I initiated a collaborative textbook on the field of games. The book is composed of 13 chapters (490 pages in PDF format) and written in a mathematically rigorous way with uniform notations, definitions, and technical developments, in order to give the only existing comprehensive account on the state of the art for this dynamic field of research. It is published online on Arxiv. I coauthored 5 chapters and acted as project leader, organising the book contents and inviting the 16 other authors.

- [1] Nathanaël Fijalkow, Nathalie Bertrand, Patricia Bouyer, Romain Brenguier, Arnaud Carayol, John Fearnley, Hugo Gimbert, Florian Horn, Rasmus Ibsen-Jensen, Nicolas Markey, Benjamin Monmege, Petr Novotný, Mickael Randour, Ocan Sankur, Sylvain Schmitz, Olivier Serre, Mateusz Skomra. *Games on Graphs*, 2023

Publicly available: <https://arxiv.org/abs/2305.10546>. To be published by Cambridge University Press in 2024.

The following work develops a theoretical framework for search algorithms in program synthesis. The experiments use DeepSynth, a grammar-based program synthesis tool with neural predictions. I was the main developer of DeepSynth and main contributor to the theoretical developments.

- [2] Nathanaël Fijalkow, Guillaume Lagarde, Théo Matricon, Kevin Ellis, Pierre Ohlmann, Akarsh Potta (by contributions). *Scaling Neural Program Synthesis with Distribution-based Search*, AAAI Conference on Artificial Intelligence 2022. Acceptance rate: 15.0%, Core ranking A\*

Publicly available: <https://www.aaai.org/AAAI22Papers/AAAI-5100.FijalkowN.pdf>

The following work solves a long-standing open question in reactive synthesis using automata-theoretic developments. My contributions were to define the automata and games models, and identify and prove the correspondence between these models and the original question.

- [3] Nathanaël Fijalkow, Bastien Maubert, Aniello Murano, Moshe Y. Vardi (by contributions). *Assume-Guarantee Synthesis for Prompt Linear Temporal Logic*, International Joint Conference on Artificial Intelligence, IJCAI 2020. Acceptance rate: 12.6%, Core ranking A\*

Publicly available: <https://www.ijcai.org/Proceedings/2020/0017.pdf>

The following work studies the classic problem in computational linguistics of learning probabilistic context-free grammars (PCFGs) from word samples. Published in a premiere journal in computational linguistics (Core ranking A\* for attached conference, not applicable for journal). Posterior to the journal publication, this work has been invited for presentation in two conferences: the Society for Computation in Linguistics and the Conference on Empirical Methods in Natural Language Processing.

- [4] Alexander Clark, Nathanaël Fijalkow (alphabetical). *Consistent unsupervised estimators for anchored PCFGs*, Transactions of the Association for Computational Linguistics in 2020.

Publicly available: <https://aclanthology.org/2020.tacl-1.27.pdf>

The fifth selected paper was published in the proceedings of a top-tier conference in Algorithms, SODA. Following a breakthrough result two years earlier constructing a quasi-polynomial time algorithm for parity games, a central question for reactive synthesis, it establishes a matching lower bound on the symbolic approaches developed for that algorithm. This important negative result has already been cited 51 times since 2019 (according to Google Scholar), which is remarkable in this community. My contribution is the definition of the main combinatorial object, universal trees, and the quasi-polynomial lower bound on their sizes.

- [5] Wojciech Czerwiński, Laure Daviaud, Nathanaël Fijalkow, Marcin Jurdziński, Ranko Lazić, Paweł Parys (alphabetical). *Universal trees grow inside separating automata: Quasi-polynomial lower bounds for parity games*, ACM-SIAM Symposium on Discrete Algorithms, SODA 2019. Acceptance rate: 31.0%, Core ranking A\*

Full version available as preprint: <https://arxiv.org/abs/1807.10546>

## Invited talks

---

*International conferences:* ▷ **2019** Symposium on Games, Automata, Logics, and Formal Verification  
▷ **2015** ESF AutoMathA conference

*International workshops:* ▷ **2023** Workshop on Open Problems in Learning and Verification of Neural Networks (Wolverine, CAV satellite event) ▷ **2020** Coalgebraic Methods in Computer Science (CMCS, ETAPS satellite event) ▷ **2019** Games for Logic and Programming Languages (GaLoP, ETAPS satellite event) ▷ **2019** Complexity, Algorithms, Automata and Logic Meet (CAALM, Chennai) ▷ **2017** Logical Structures for Computation at the Simons Institute, Berkeley ▷ **2016** Collective Adaptive Systems Synthesis (Casting, ETAPS satellite event)

*Tutorials and research schools:* ▷ **2024** Symposium on Principles of Programming Languages (POPL) ▷ **2023** World Symposium on Formal Methods (FM) ▷ **2022** French School for Young Researchers in Computer Science and Mathematics (EJCIM) ▷ **2020** European Conference on Artificial Intelligence (ECAI) ▷ **2019** ForMaL DigiCosme Spring School on Formal Methods and Machine Learning

*Specialised workshops by invitation:* ▷ **2024** Dagstuhl Seminar: Artificial Intelligence and Formal Methods Join Forces for Reliable Autonomy ▷ **2023** Dagstuhl Seminar: Approaches and Applications of Inductive Programming ▷ **2023** Dagstuhl Seminar: Model Learning for Improved Trustworthiness in Autonomous Systems ▷ **2022** Dagstuhl Seminar: Finite Model Theory ▷ **2021** Dagstuhl Seminar: Unambiguity in Automata Theory ▷ **2021** Lorentz Center: Rigorous Automated Planning ▷ **2020** Barbados Bellairs Centre: Probabilistic Programming ▷ **2019** Dagstuhl Seminar: Logic and Learning ▷ **2019** Barbados Bellairs Centre: Logical Foundations for Data Science

*Seminar talks:* over 20 research groups across Europe

## Professional service

---

### Scientific Leadership.....

#### Managing Editor for TheoretiCS

*Since 2021*

TheoretiCS is a Diamond Open Access Journal covering all areas of Theoretical Computer Science and launched in Oct 2021. It works as an ArXiv overlay journal, implying that access to all papers is free. Authors are not required to pay any publication fees or article processing charges, and retain copyright. TheoretiCS ambitions to attract the very best papers in each field of Theoretical Computer Science. As one of the two Managing Editors I actively participate in materialising this ambition.

#### Head of GT-DAAL: Data, Automata, Algebra, and Languages

*Since 2018*

GDR-IM is a French network gathering computer scientists and mathematicians, it is composed of a dozen working groups and organises and supports several national scientific events. As one of the two Heads of GT-DAAL, one of the working group of GDR-IM, I coordinate the national events pertaining to Database Theory, Automata Theory, and Logic.

#### Publicity Chair for the Highlights of Logic, Games, and Automata Conference

*2017 – 2022*

Highlights of Logic, Games and Automata is an annual conference aiming at integrating the community working in these fields. It is modelled after mathematics conferences: all relevant papers, published elsewhere or not, are accepted for a short presentation. A visit to the Highlights conference offers a wide picture of the latest research in the field and a chance to meet everybody in the community. As Publicity Chair I help disseminating the conference and related events, and in this capacity I sit in the Steering Committee.

## Principal Investigator of Research Grants.....

<b>PEPR IA</b> <i>SAIF: Safe AI using Formal Methods</i>	<b>4 years, 900k€</b> Sept. 2023 – Aug. 2027
<b>IEA</b> <i>WinCent: Applications of Program Synthesis</i>	<b>2 years, 14k€</b> Jan 2023 – Dec 2025
<b>ANR JCJC</b> <i>G4S: Games for Synthesis</i>	<b>4 years, 140k€</b> Jan 2022 – Dec 2025
<b>CNRS Momentum</b> <i>DeepSynth: Machine Learning Guided Program Synthesis</i>	<b>3 years, 180k€ + 2 years post-doc</b> Jan 2019 – Dec 2021

## Program Committees of International Conferences.....

▷ **2024** International Conference on Artificial Intelligence (AAAI) ▷ **2024** International Conference on Verification, Model Checking, and Abstract Interpretation (VMCAI) ▷ **2023** International Joint Conference on Artificial Intelligence (IJCAI) ▷ **2023** International Conference on Artificial Intelligence (AAAI) ▷ **2023** International Conference on Quantitative Evaluation of SysTems (QEST) ▷ **2022** Computer Science in Russia (CSR) ▷ **2022** Mathematical Foundations of Computer Science (MFCS), ▷ **2019** International Conference on Reachability Problems (RP), ▷ **2019** International Colloquium on Automata, Languages and Programming (ICALP), ▷ **2019** Foundations of Software Systems and Computer Science (FoSSaCS), ▷ **2019** Highlights of Logic, Games and Automata (Highlights), ▷ **2018** Mathematical Foundations of Computer Science (MFCS), ▷ **2018** Highlights of Logic, Games and Automata (Highlights)

## PhD Committees.....

▷ **2023** Nathan Thomasset, Strategy complexity for Gale-Stewart games (*LMF*) ▷ **2023** Grégoire Menguy, Black-box analysis of binary code (*CEA List*) ▷ **2022** Cedric Koh, On Linear, Fractional and Submodular Optimization (*London School of Economics*) ▷ **2022** Xavier Badin de Montjoye, Strategy Improvement Method for Solving Simple Stochastic Games (*Université de Versailles Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines*) ▷ **2019** Hugo Bazille, Detection and Quantification of Events in Stochastic Systems (*ENS Rennes*)

## Co-Organisation of Seminars and Working Groups.....

▷ **2024** Dagstuhl Seminar on Stochastic Games ▷ **2023** Dagstuhl Seminar on the Futures of Reactive Synthesis ▷ **2020** Online Worldwide Seminar on Logic and Semantics (OWLS) ▷ **2018** Theory of Machine Learning Reading Group (*LaBRI, Bordeaux*) ▷ **2018** Formal Methods Team Seminar (*LaBRI, Bordeaux*) ▷ **2017** Logic Seminar (*Alan Turing Institute, London*) ▷ **2016** Fellows Logic Open (*Simons Institute, Berkeley*) ▷ **2015** Verification Seminar (*Oxford*) ▷ **2014** Automata Seminar (*LIAFA, Paris*)

## Supervision.....

I have supervised **16** master and undergraduate students for internships, **5** PhD students (2 defended), and **2** postdocs.

## Teaching

▷ **Since 2021** Games Techniques in Computer Science, Parisian Master in Computer Science, MPRI (12h) ▷ **Since 2019** Theory and Practice of Reinforcement Learning, PhD Programme in LaBRI, Bordeaux (12h) ▷ **Since 2019** Reinforcement Learning, IA Master at ENSEIRB (18h) ▷ **2018 – 2022** Games for Synthesis and Control, Master Programme at University of Bordeaux (20h)